BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Housing

- **House prices in British Columbia's urban centres showed little or no increase between January and April 1997.** Notable exceptions were Abbotsford, where executive and luxury homes and standard condominium prices rose between 6.9% and 12.8%, and Langley, where executive homes rose 11.8%. The largest declines were in the Victoria market where the price of a detached bungalow dropped 4.7% and a standard condominium, 7.7%.

  Source: Royal LePage Survey of Canadian House Prices

Department Store Sales

- **Department store sales in BC in May 1997 were $179.3 million, up 16.6% from the previous May**. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Agriculture

- **British Columbia's 10,700 farms had average operating revenues in 1995 of $174,873, 26% above the Canadian average.** At the same time, operating expenses in BC were 87.9% of revenue compared with 83% for Canada as a whole. The highest average net operating income in the province was recorded by dairy farms ($74,724), followed by greenhouse & nursery operations ($52,998). Lowest average net income was shown by livestock combination farms ($2,666).

  The average income of farm operators of unincorporated farms in BC was $32,580; however, 78.7% of that income came from non-farm sources.

  Source: SC, Agriculture Financial Stastistics

Transportation

- **The for-hire trucking industry in British Columbia generated transportation revenues in 1995 of $1.2 billion, and employed 4,800 company drivers and 3,500 owner operators.** Twenty-one million tonnes of trucked freight that moved within Canada originated in the Pacific Region (BC and the territories). Crude Wood Materials accounted for 21% of freight revenues within the province, followed by Wood Fabricated Materials at 11%. Major commodites trucked to other parts of Canada were General Freight, representing 12% of revenues in inter-regional movements and Wood Fabricated Materials for an additional 11%.

  Canadian carriers moved 2.9 million tonnes from the Pacific Region to the USA, earning revenues of $158 million.

  The private trucking industry (trucking fleets operated by non-trucking companies for their own use) employed 2,000 people in British Columbia, including 1,400 drivers and helpers.

  Source: SC, Trucking in Canada

Population

- **The rate of natural increase in the population was lowest at the turn of the century.** With the approach of the next century, British Columbia is again experiencing a low rate of natural increase, which is expressed as the number of live births less the number of deaths per 1,000 population. The rate of natural increase in BC was 4.8 in 1996.

  Source: Vital Statistics Annual Report

Report **Mr. Mom**

Did you know...?
British Columbia produced 8,000 tonnes of lettuce, 12,000 tonnes of greenhouse tomatoes and 19 million cucumbers in 1996. Dig in to those summer salads!

Marriage

- **The marriage rate has shown a consistent downward trend since the 1980's.** In 1996, the marriage rate of 5.9 per 1,000 population was the lowest since 1933, when it was 5.65. A total of 22,833 marriages were solemnized in this province in 1996.

  Source: Vital Statistics Annual Report

The Nation

- **Canada's economy picked up speed in April, with real GDP at factor cost increasing 0.8% (seasonally adjusted) over the previous month.** This more than reversed the effects of a slight downturn (-0.2%) in the economy in March. While both the goods and service sectors posted strong gains, most of the impetus for growth in April came from goods producing industries, where GDP was up 1.2% over the previous month. The primary industries were a major factor in the strength of the goods sector. GDP growth in the fishing (+0.8%), logging (+4.4%) and mining (+2.1%) industries was the strongest it has been since last fall. Manufacturing continued to be volatile, with real GDP rising 1.5% after a 0.7% drop in the previous month.

  In the service sector, GDP rose 0.6% in April. Growth rates in the for-profit sector ranged from 0.2% in the communications industry to 1.7% in wholesale trade. The retail trade (+1.1%) industry also posted strong gains in April. However, GDP was down 0.6% in the government services industry.

  Source: Statistics Canada

- **Canadian international transactions in services reached new highs in 1996 and the service trade deficit has fallen for the third year in a row.** The deficit was $9.9 billion.

  The largest component of the service account is travel, covering business and personal travel including that for educational and health reasons. Education-related travel receipts have almost tripled in the past 10 years with Canada posting a trade surplus of almost $900 million with countries other than the USA. As well, business travel receipts to Canada have increased 40 times over the same period to $2.2 billion. However, Canadians travelling abroad leave Canada with a $3 billion deficit on the travel account.

  Transportation payments to foreign carriers outweigh Canadian receipts for a balance on the transportation account of $-3 billion.

  Commercial services receipts increased 3.5 times since 1986 to $17.97 billion. Significant growth has been registered in Finance and Insurance Services, Computer and Information Services, Management Services and R & D. These sectors accounted for 54% of receipts in 1996. Commercial services payments were $21.88 billion, leaving the balance on this account at $-3.9 billion.

  Source: SC, Canada's International Transactions in Services

- **Pulp and paper capacity in Canada continued to grow in 1996 although production declined slightly.** The industry operated at 89.7% of capacity compared with 94.4% in 1994 and the high of 95.3% in 1980. Total Canadian shipments of pulp and paper products totaled 27.96 tonnes of which 83% was exported.

  Recyclable paper consumption as a percentage of paper and paperboard production reached 23.8% in 1996. The recovery rate of recyclable paper (i.e. that used in domestic manufacturing and exports) was 43.6%.

  Canadian newsprint capacity was 25.8% of estimated world capacity, down from 30.7% ten years ago. During the same period, world demand rose 24.4%.

  Source: Reference Tables, Canadian Pulp and Paper Association

- **Canadian air fares for domestic flights averaged $177 in the third quarter of 1996, down 13% from the record high of $204 in the second quarter of 1995.** Eighty-three percent of passengers on domestic scheduled flights travelled on discount fares.

  Source: Statistics Canada

highlights, Issue 97-27
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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

Infoline Report:

July 4, 1997

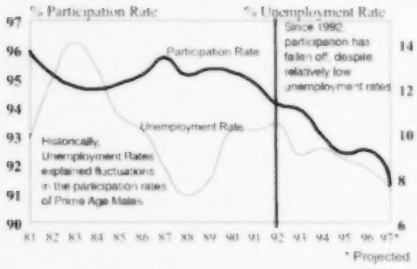
BC Prime-Age Males — Are they becoming "Stay-at-Home Dads"?

Originally published in *Earnings and Employment Trends, March 1997*. An annual subscription is $60 plus GST.

Men age 25 to 44 historically have been the most reliable, steady, never-changing, unexciting demographic group in the workforce. Their pattern of work has varied so little over the years that they give analysts nothing to talk about. Average workforce participation has hovered around the 95 per cent mark every year. In the past, only downturns in the economic cycle and a lack of available jobs seemed to deter them from either working or looking for work. Even then, since 1976 right through to 1991, the group's participation rate never dropped below 94.5 per cent and never went above 96.5 per cent. However, since 1992, there are signs that this pattern may be changing.

Participation rates in the labour force for this demographic group have been falling almost continuously for the last five years so that currently it is averaging only 91 per cent. The unemployment rate likewise has been decreasing, indicating that lack of job opportunities is not the cause for this change. (Historically, when unemployment rates fell, participation rates rose.) So what are these prime age males doing if they are not working or job searching?

BC Prime Age Males - Their Participation in the Workforce Has Been Declining in the 90's



From the Statistics Canada Survey of Consumer Finances, it is possible to determine the reason why people are not in the workforce. When comparing 1994 data (most recent) to that of five years previous, prime-age males have decreased their labour market participation rate, not because more are now attending school full-time nor because more have chosen to be voluntarily idle. What does show up is a dramatic increase in the number of prime age males who are not working because they are "keeping house". In 1994, 2500 prime age males gave that reason compared to 700 in 1989.

Another indicator that shows more men are choosing to be stay-at-home dads for at least a few months, is the increase in the number of men who have received parental/adoption benefits under the UIC/EIC program. Men became eligible to receive these benefits in 1991. In that year, on average 94 men per month in BC took advantage of the program. That number has climbed every year and is currently running at 170 per month. (Both mother and father are not entitled to these benefits at the same time.)

The data sources currently available to examine whether or not prime age males are taking on a larger role in being the prime child caretaker are not very comprehensive or definitive. However, the feeling in individual workplaces is that this is happening, albeit gradually.

Furthermore, there are compelling economic reasons that would further backup this trend. The comparative earning capacity between the spouses would be a factor in the decision as to who would stay at home with the kids. In 1989, amongst couples age 25 - 44 who both worked full-time/full-year, in only 14 per cent of the cases did the woman earn more than her spouse – by 1994 that percentage had increased to 22 per cent. A year from now, we will be able to look at family income data from the 1996 Census to explore if the tendency towards husband/wife equitable earning power has continued. ■

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/97	% change on year ago
BC	3,915.9	2.2
Canada	30,202.9	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	on year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Apr	2,950	12.9
Merchandise Exports (raw) Apr	2,247	10.9
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Apr	2,685	3.5
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change
(all items - 1986=100)	May '97	on year ago
BC	139.9	0.9
Canada	137.7	1.5
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change
(seasonally adjusted)	May '97	on year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,002	1.6
Employed - BC	1,825	1.5
Unemployed - BC	176	3.0
		May '96
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.8	8.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	9.5	9.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Jul 2/97	Jul 3/96
Prime Business Rate	4.75	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.20	6.50
- 5 year	7.00	8.50
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jul 2/97	Jul 3/96
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.3773	1.3608
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.7261	0.7349
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Apr '97	on year ago
BC	607.62	2.0
Canada	598.22	3.9

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Review

Released this week by BC STATS

- Small Business Quarterly, First Quarter 1997
- Exports, March 1997

Next week

- Tourism Room Revenue, February 1997

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